TEACHER’S RESOURCE GUIDE

MARCH 6 - 22, 2020
Using both the book and the play of *Iron-Hearted Violet* for cross-curricular and interdisciplinary study in your classroom has many jumping off points. From lessons on adaptation and playwriting to activities involving book inspired writing assignments to science connected learning on light and mirrors, the book and play offers many chances to reach any number of curriculum goals.

Below are a few suggestions for curriculum that incorporates both the book and the play of *Iron-Hearted Violet* into your classroom studies.
THE STORY

“In most fairy tales, princesses are beautiful, dragons are terrifying, and stories are harmless. This isn’t most fairy tales.” When Princess Violet and her best friend Demetrius discover a forbidden book in a hidden room, they unknowingly release the evil Nybbas into their world. The two friends pair up with an ancient dragon to try and save their kingdom, but the wicked creature’s triumph or demise all depends on how the story is told.

“Sometimes stories can save the world.”

STAGES VIDEOS ABOUT THE PLAY


POINTS OF DISCUSSION

CURIOSITY

In the book, after finding the hidden library Demetrius and Violet vow to never go searching for it again. But, Violet’s curiosity has her spending many years looking for it again in secret. Why do you think Violet is compelled to look for the Hidden Library again? Why is Demetrius not compelled to do so? Their reactions to the library are very different from each other. Why do you think that is? Is it curiosity or something else?

HEROES

The Dragon, at the end of the story, says, “Love makes heroes of us all.” What does the Dragon mean by this? Do you think this is true? What are the traits of a hero? Can anyone be a hero? What makes one do heroic things? Tell the story of a hero in your life? Have you ever acted like a hero?

TRUE FRIENDSHIPS

How does the friendship between Demetrius and Violet benefit each one of them? How does their friendship benefit the whole kingdom? If they were not friends, would the story have turned out differently? Does the fate of the kingdom rest on their trust of each other? On their friendship being strong and caring? What are the traits of a good friendship? What friendships help you be your best self?
THEATRE ACTIVITIES
BEFORE AND AFTER (GRADES 2-8)

BEFORE THE PLAY:
Read *Iron-Hearted Violet*. With student input, establish the expectations for the upcoming play. What *actions* or *events* might be seen on stage? What *characters* might the play include from the book? What may the *set* look like? How about other theatrical elements, such as *sound, lights and costumes*? How may a dragon appear on stage? How will the Nybbas appear? How may the world of the story be created? Students may draw or write about what they anticipate seeing.

AFTER THE PLAY:
Revisit the expectations to see how many were realized. Discuss the similarities and differences from the book to the play, in terms of plot, characters, and action. Were the characters as portrayed on the stage faithful to the characters in the book? How or why? How would you describe the main “*message*” of the play? How was it similar or different from the book? How were the magical elements from the story portrayed on stage? How were sound, lights, costumes and set used to help create the world of the play?
ACTIVITY #1
DRAMATIZING KEY EVENTS – WRITING DIALOGUE


2) Split the class into small groups (four to five per group.) Have each group work together to create a timeline of important events in the story. (See links below for timeline printouts.)
   * http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/storymap/
   * http://www.dailyteachingtools.com/free-graphic-organizers-w.html

3) Have each group present their timeline to the class. Then, have each group choose one event from their timeline and write an action statement for it. Such as, in this scene (fill in character) (fill in verb.) As in, “In this scene, Violet and Demetrius become friends after Demetrius saves her from the bull in the pasture.”
4) Then, as a group, have them rewrite the event as a short play to act out for the rest of the class. Before they start writing the dialogue, make sure each group:
   1) Writes their action statement (what must happen in the scene);
   2) Writes a list of characters that are in the scene; and
   3) Decides specifically where the scene takes place, including time of day.

Limit location switching and emphasize the importance of deciding what happens, whom it happens to and where it happens before staring. Giving examples of what dialogue looks like is helpful. Have students start with the statement, “Lights up” and then describe what the place looks like and then who enters it. This helps in focusing the group to think about time, place and character in terms of dramatic form. It is helpful to be grounded in this before generating dialogue (what the characters say.)

ACTIVITY #2
ROLE PLAYING—MONOLOGUE WRITING

OBJECTIVE
Students map out the character traits of Violet and Demetrius, Cassian, Dragon and the Nybbas—five prominent characters in the story. Students then write a short monologue from the perspective of the character. Students will demonstrate an understanding of character traits; recall facts, characters and events from the story; and analyze the text to find evidence of these character traits.
ROLE PLAYING—
MONOLOGUE
WRITING
(continued)

OUTLINE

- Use the character of King Randall. In a whole group or small group discussion:

1) Plot out the main points of what happens to King Randall in the story.
   PLOT ONE: King Randall goes on a Dragon Hunt to Save the Dragon
   • Discuss what King Randall says and does in this section.
   • Discuss how King Randall acts and interacts with other characters.
   • Make a list of words that describe King Randall during this section.
   • Choose four words from the list that best encompass his whole character.

2) Discuss where in the book these character traits reveal themselves. (Students are like detectives, finding evidence to support the chosen character traits. What the character does or says is the proof that this word describes him/her.)

3) Then, students choose the characters—Violet, Demetrius, Cassian, Dragon or the Nybbas and complete the character analysis process used above, solely or in pairs.

4) Students fill in a character analysis diagram. In the middle of the diagram is their character name, then the four character traits in circles flowing out of the center, then the proof of those traits are drawn around those circles. An example of what this diagram looks like is at:
   http://www.enchantedlearning.com/graphicorganizers/cloud/43.shtml

5) After completing the diagram, students think about what their character wants in the story. Express this in the form of a “to” verb. This is the character’s objective. Their objective should encompass what drives them through the whole story.

6) Students write: My name is (Fill character name) I want to (Fill in objective)

7) Students use the character’s objective as a jumping off point to write a short monologue from their character’s point of view. The monologue should start with their completed “I want” sentence. The rest of the monologue should tell how they go about getting what they want, why they want it so much and why is it important to them.

8) Students perform their monologues for the class. Or the monologues could be posted or made into a book.
ACTIVITY #3
COMPARE & CONTRAST THE ART OF ADAPTATION

1. The play is an original adaptation of the novel, *Iron-Hearted Violet* by Kelly Barnhill. It is an opportunity to discuss with students the elements of adaptation. First, discuss the definition of adaptation—the rewriting of a work written in a different genre or medium than it was originally written.


3. Then, before seeing the play, discuss with your students how the book may be presented on the stage. What do they think might be some of the difficulties of putting *Iron-Hearted Violet* on the stage? How might the story be different than the book? If they were to make the book into a play, how would they choose to do it? Discuss all the storytelling elements, such as the narrative perspective of Cassian, the Storyteller and the fantastical elements of the world depicted in the book? How can the narrative as described by Cassian translate into a play? How could the mirrored world and the fantastical elements translate to the stage? How might character, setting, plot, and dragon, and the evil Nybbas be portrayed on stage?

4. Then, after seeing the play, help your students analyze how the playwright chose to adapt the novel into the play they saw. Why do they think the playwright (or director/actors) made the decisions they did in order to turn the book into a play? Revisit all the different elements such as character, setting, plot, and spectacle. How were these achieved for the stage adaptation?

5. Students could then create a comparison chart or a Venn diagram to show the similarities and differences of the book to the play.
WRITING ACTIVITIES
(Grades 2-6)

THE POWER OF STORIES

The power of stories is a theme in *Iron Hearted Violet*. Discuss with students how stories affect their lives—how stories help us or change us. Have them compose a written reflection about how a book helped them learn about themselves or the world around them, or helped them grow as a person or helped change how they think about a certain topic. Have them identify the book, tell how it changed their perspective or helped them grow. Make sure they give specific evidence to support their writing. As an extension, students could prepare a book talk about a book and share it with another class.

TROPES & STEREOTYPES

In *Iron Hearted Violet* many of the story tropes and stereotypes that we are conditioned to expect are not followed (especially in common fairy tales and Disney movies.) Throughout the story, many people or things are considered not the way they are “supposed” to be. Some think Violet does not look like a “real” princess and King Randall does not behave like a “real” king and the Dragon is nothing more than an “overgrown lizard.” What is meant, however, is that these characters do not conform to traditional stereotypes or story tropes of what a King, a Princess or a Dragon is. Before reading the book, ask students to write a description of a princess, a king and a dragon. Collect these descriptions and keep for later reference. After reading the book, return the students’ descriptions and ask them to evaluate their earlier answers. Would they respond in the same way now? Do King Randall, Violet or Dragon fit their descriptions? Why or why not?

PLAYING AT STORIES

Playing at Stories: Improve Writing In *Iron Hearted Violet*, Demetrius and Violet “play at stories.” They take turns telling stories as Cassian suggests topics or settings. Have students write down settings, problems, and main events on slips of paper. Then choose one from each category and challenge students to write a short story using the selected setting, problem, and events. Students may want to work on their stories independently or collaborate with a partner, just like Violet and Demetrius often worked together to tell a story. Share the stories as a class. How were they alike and different?
CREATING FANTASTICAL SETTINGS

The setting of *Iron Hearted Violet* is both similar and different from other fairytales. Have students choose one scene from the story that seems familiar to other fairytales. Have students illustrate the setting with as much detail as possible. Then, have them choose a scene from the story that seems unlike other stories. Have them draw this scene as well. Have students share their drawings and explain why they chose each scene for each category. Did students choose the same scenes? Were there any images that seemed to appear over and over? Discuss how the author used the familiar as a tool to create a whole new experience.

Now, using this analysis of how the world created in the story works, looks and feels, have the students create their own fantasy world. Can they use the idea of familiar and unfamiliar to create their own unique setting? What are the rules of this world? Do magical creatures exist here? Does magic exist?

Once students have thought through their fantasy world, have them:

1. **NAME THE WORLD** – much like the Andulan Realms in *Iron Hearted Violet* or Middle Earth in *The Hobbit*.
2. **DRAW A MAP OF THE WORLD** - much like the map in the book *Iron Hearted Violet* or of Middle Earth in *The Hobbit*.
3. **DESCRIBE THE WORLD** – For example the world in *Iron Hearted Violet* may be described as:
   “Long ago, in the mirrored world, with its two suns—the Greater Sun and the Lesser Sun—there thrived a beautiful kingdom—the Andulan Realms. Located in the center of the mirrored world on the lowland plain with rich, fertile soils and a peaceful, prosperous life for all. To the north of the Andulan Realms lay the great mountains, home to the terrible tyrant, the Mountain King. In the mirrored world was a castle built of stone stood at the center of the Andulan Realms.”
4. **OUTLINE A STORY** – After creating their fantasy world, have students outline a story that would take place in the world that they have created.
EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

FUN WITH MIRRORS (GRADES K-12)

When exploring the Hidden Library in Iron Hearted Violet, Violet asks where the light is coming from and Demetrius tells her it is probably mirrors, it is just a trick of the light. Mirrors are a big part of the story and world in the book and the play. It is an opportunity to bring mirror experiments into your classroom. Below are links to STEM related lesson plans involving mirrors.

- [https://stardate.org/teachers/plans/mirror-mirror](https://stardate.org/teachers/plans/mirror-mirror) (Grades 6-8)
- [https://thestemway.com/2018/03/how-do-mirrors-work](https://thestemway.com/2018/03/how-do-mirrors-work) - STEM mirror activities for grades K-3

FUN WITH DRAGONS (GRADES 3-5)

Dragons are mythological figures found in the folklore of many cultures. Making appearances in folktales and artwork from countries around the globe, dragons have captured the imagination of people for centuries. Have students divide into small groups and choose a culture or country to research. Their goal is to find a story that includes a dragon. Then, they should explain how dragons are viewed in that society (evil, beneficent, bad omens, good omens), discuss how they were described in the story or in that culture, and locate the origins of the story on a world map or globe. Students may want to re-tell their story using simple props, costumes, and scenery. After the presentations, have students compare and contrast how different cultures view dragons. Looking at the world map, does geographic location seem to play a role in how dragons are viewed? Do all cultures describe dragons in the same way? Which culture’s image of dragons is most like the ones in Iron Hearted Violet?
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

FURTHER READING
OTHER WORKS BY KELLY BARNHILL

NOVELS

2016

The Girl Who Drew the Moon
Kelly Barnhill

2014

The Witch’s Boy
Kelly Barnhill

2011

The Mostly True Story of Jack
Kelly Barnhill

NOVELLA’S & SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS

2019

Dreadful Young Ladies and Other Stories
Kelly Barnhill

2015

The Unlicensed Magician
Kelly Barnhill

Kelly Barnhill’s Official Website: https://kellybarnhill.wordpress.com

OTHER FANTASY NOVELS

The Girl Who Looked Beyond the Stars by Sheena Meyer
The Secret Lake: A children’s mystery adventure by Karen Inglis
The Girl with the Silver Eyes by Willo Davis Roberts
The Mystery of Graven Manor by Joy Wodhams
The Forbidden Library by Django Wexler